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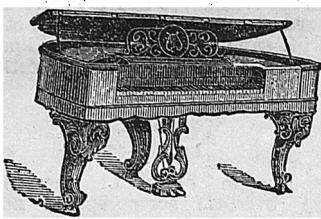
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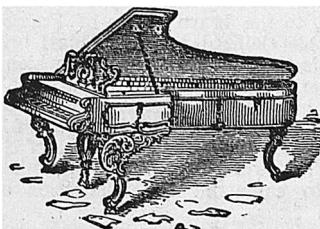
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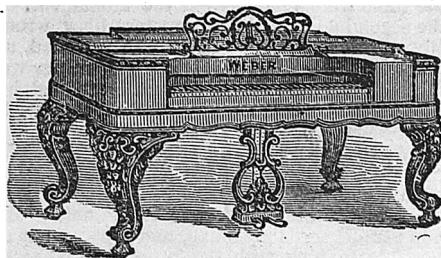


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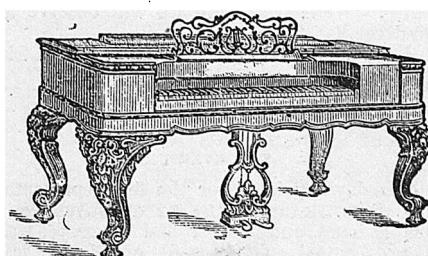


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“DON GIOVANNI.”

An Incident in the Life of Mozart.

[Concluded.]

VI.

MOZART'S SPEECH.

“Most honored ladies and gentlemen,

“It is known to you that some years ago I received from your *impressario*, Signor Guardasoni, the flattering commission to compose an opera for his company; I undertook the task more readily, as I had the honor of knowing you all, and the satisfaction of being convinced I was laboring for true artists.

“My work is finished; ‘*Don Giovanni—ossia, ill dissoluto punito.*’ I assure you I have honestly and carefully studied the peculiar character of each of the honored members of Guardasoni's present company, having peculiar regard to them in the parts of an opera. I have thus succeeded in composing a work, which forms not only in itself a harmonious whole, but in each separate part promises the artist for whom it was intended, the fairest success—an opera, which I believe will please even in future times, which will be perhaps pronounced my best work, as I myself esteem it such! But one thing I know—that a representation so perfect, as I hope for it through you, can never be procured hereafter.

“Where could we find a Don Giovanni like my young friend Luigi Bassi? His noble figure, his wonderful voice, his manner, his wit, the un-

studied fire, when he bends in homage to beauty—eminently qualify him for the hero of my opera.

"Could I point out for him a more perfect Donna Anna than the beautiful, stately, virtuous Saporitti? All conflicting feelings of sympathy—revenge—love—hate, she will depict in song and in action, as I conceived them when I composed the work.

"And who could represent the faithful, delicate, resentful, yet ever-forgiving, ever-loving Elyria, more consummately than the charming, gentle Caterina Micelli? She is Don Giovanni's warning angel, forsaking him only in the last moment. Ah! such an Angel should convert me, for I also am a great sinner, *spite of my insignificant figure!* And now for the little impatient, mischievous, inexperienced and curious Zerlina—

"Oh!—la ci darem la mano—Signorelli Bondini! Sweet little one—you are too tempting! and if my stanzerl were to sing her 'vedrai carino' to me like you—by Jupiter—it were all over with me!

"That the good Felice Ponziani is satisfied with his Leporello, and the excellent Antonio Baglioni with his Don Ottavio, rejoices my very heart. Signor Giuseppe Lolli has, out of friendship to me, undertaken the part of Masetto—for he would have all the parts well performed. I have thanked him for his kind attention.

"And thus I close my speech so meet—
With joy the evening will I greet,
When my beloved opera
Through you appears in gloria!
It author and singers are agreed,
Of toil for the rest there is no need!
And you shall see with what delight
I will direct and set you right.
Let every one but do his best—
We of success assured may rest;
So tells you from his candid heart,
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART."

The master ended his speech; his audience clapped approbation; and they separated in mutual good humor.

VII.

THE REHEARSAL.

On the 28th of October, "Don Giovanni" being complete except the overture, the rehearsals began. On the morning of the 1st, before Mozart went to the Opera house, he walked for recreation in the public garden. Before him he saw the well-known figure of the trumpeter Nepomuck Stradetzky, absorbed, as it seemed, in meditation. Mozart walked faster, overtook, and tapped him gently on the shoulder. Nepomuck turned quickly, growling out, "Ha!—what do you want?" but bowed almost to the ground as he recognized the master, saying,

"I beg a thousand pardons, worthy Herr von Mozart! I was deep in thought—I beg your pardon!"

"For what?" replied Mozart. "Nobody is pleased at being disturbed in a reverie—not I—at least. But what were you thinking about, Herr von Stradetzky?"

Nepomuck answered with a clear brow, "Ay! of what but your opera, most excellent Herr von Mozart? Is not Prague full of expectation? Wherever I go I am asked, 'Herr von Nepomuck, when is the first representation?—You play the tenor trumpet—eh?—Herr von Nepomuck?'

"No, I answer, 'the bass trumpet.'

"So, so, they say, 'the bass trumpet—eh!—Herr von Nepomuck?'"

"Have you tried your notes, Herr von Nepomuck?"

"Yes, indeed, Herr von Mozart, and am delighted with the long, full tones; but in both choral songs are a few deuced hard notes."

"Pah! you will get through with them, Herr von Nepomuck?"

"I hope so, Herr von Mozart; and will do my best."

They walked a little longer, chatting in the shaded avenue, then went to the theatre.

The rehearsal began. Mozart was everywhere; now in the orchestra—now on the stage. In the ball-scene of the first act, where Bassi did not dance to please him, he himself joined the circle, and danced a minuet with Zerlina with so much grace, that he did all credit to his master Novere. So by a bold stroke he amended the shriek of Zerlina, which after repeated "Da Capo" did not suit him. Creeping behind her at the moment she was about to repeat the cry for the fourth time, he suddenly seized her with such violence that, really frightened, she screamed in good earnest; whereupon he cried, laughing,

"Bravo! that is what I want—you must shriek thus at the representation."

The good humored little Bondini forgave him her fright; but an instruction in the second act was not so well received. Here, in the church-yard scene, to strengthen the effect of both adagios, which the statue has to sing, he had placed the three trumpeters behind the monument. In the second adagio, the trumpeters blew wrong; Mozart cried, "Da Capo!" it was repeated, and this time the bass only failed. The master went to the desk, and patiently showed Nepomuck how he wanted the notes played; but even after the third repetition he made the same blunder.

"What, the mischief, Stradetzky!" cried Mozart, with vexation, and stamping his foot, "you must play correctly!"

Nepomuck, offended, grumbled out, "Herr von Stradetzky is my name, and I play what it is possible to play with the trumpet! What you have written *there* the devil himself could not play!"

"No, in truth!" said Mozart, gently; "and it what I have written suits not the instrument, I must by all means alter it. He did so, and added to the original both bassoons as well as two counter-basses. Finally, he let the chorus of furies sing *under* the scene, and would not permit the demons visibly to drag Don Giovanni into the abyss.

"He is man enough not to let the devil *call* in vain," observed he, laughing.

With this the rehearsal ended. As the master went home from the theatre, Nepomuck Stradetzky came behind him, took hold of the skirt of his coat, and said earnestly,

"Do not be angry with me, Herr von Mozart, for being a little bearish! That is often my way, and you know I mean well."

Mozart replied cordially, "Nay, Herr von Nepomuck, I ought to be grateful to you for having pointed out to me my error in the notes for the trumpet. Yet, 'tis true, faults may be told pleasantly. Well! in future we will observe more courtesy."

Nepomuck promised, and they parted in friendship.

VIII.

THE OVERTURE.

The day appointed for the first representation of "Don Giovanni," the 3d of November, was just at hand, and Mozart had never yet written the overture! Guardasoni urged—his friends advised—Mozart only laughed, and said, "I will write it this afternoon!" That afternoon he went on an excursion of pleasure with his wife. Guardasoni was in despair. He sent messengers to the four quarters of the heavens—Mozart was nowhere to be found, and Strohbach was obliged to promise, that in case of extreme necessity, he would use the overture to "Idomeneo."

It was midnight when Mozart's carriage stopped before his dwelling; and his friends, Guardasoni at their head, surrounded immediately with complaints and reproaches. The master sprang out of the carriage, crying, "Leave me to myself! now I will go to work in earnest." He went into the house, shut the door behind him, threw himself on his seat at the writing table, and began. In a few minutes, however, he started up and in a laughing manner said to his wife, "I will not go yet! I will go to bed for an hour; wake me up in that time, and make me

some punch." And without undressing he flung himself on the bed. Constance prepared the punch, and in an hour's time went to awaken her husband; but he slept so sweetly, she could not find it in her heart to disturb him. She let him lie another hour; then, as time pressed she awakened him.

Mozart rubbed his eyes, shook himself, collected his thoughts, and without further ado, began his work. Constance gave him the punch, seated herself by him, and to keep him in good spirits, began to tell him all manner of funny and horrible stories of the Princefish, Bluebeard, &c., till Mozart, still writing, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

At two in the morning he began his wonderful work; at six it lay on the desk finished. The master arose; he could hardly stand upright.

"Done for this time!" he muttered; "but I shall not soon try it again!" and he laid himself down again to sleep.

At seven the copyist came for the notes; but could not finish writing them before half-past seven in the evening, so that the performance was postponed till eight o'clock. Still wet and covered with sand, the hastily-copied parts were brought in and arranged in the orchestra.

IX.

CONCLUSION.

The strange story of the composition of the overture soon spread among the audience. When Mozart came into the orchestra, he was greeted with thundering "bravos" from an overflowing house. He bowed low, and turning to the performers in the orchestra, said,—

"Gentlemen, we have not been able to have a rehearsal of the overture; but I know what I can venture with you. So quick—to the work!"

He took up the time-staff, gave the signal, and like a thunder-burst, with the clang of trumpets, sounded the first accord of the awful "Andante." That, as well as the succeeding "Allegro," was executed by the orchestra with admirable spirit. When the overture was at an end, there was a perfect storm of applause.

"There were, indeed, a few notes dropped under the desk," observed Mozart, smiling to Strohbach: "but, on the whole, it went off splendidly, I am greatly obliged to these gentlemen."

How during the rest of the opera the applause rose from scene, to scene, how from its first representation to the present day, on every occasion, the "Fin chan dal vino" called and still calls forth not only enthusiastic Da Capos, is well known, to the brave people of Prague, but to the whole civilized world. Thus I bring to an end this little circle of scenes, which I do not presume to offer as a tale of art. They may prove, however, a pleasant memorial of the first production of a noble work, whose fiftieth anniversary was celebrated on the 4th of November, 1837; and which is destined through all future time to command the admiration of feeling hearts.

[From Blackwood's Magazine.]

THE TWO ARTISTS.

BY DON JOSE' BERNUDEZ DE CASTRO.

[Concluded.]

III.

The studio was in the same state in which we left it. Two men climbed up to it, who might have appeared to be father and son.

"Where is the canvass?" said the old man.

"There!" said the painter, and raised it from the ground dirty, and soiled, and blotted.

"What a shame!"—there is no excuse for you. You were not pleased with your work, weren't you? Then in heaven's name what would you